

One of 19 Firefighters Killed from Ashe, ASU

Written by Steve Frank
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One of the 19 firefighters killed in that Arizona wildfire was an Ashe Central High School and ASU graduate. 43-year old Eric Marsh loved the work of fighting the worst fires, and had since a very young age, according to his uncle. Robert Marsh told Channel 9, "We're all in shock and you never expect anything like this." Robert Marsh said he learned of Eric Marsh's death Monday morning while having breakfast, saying, "People were talking about the incident; we said surely it wasn't Eric's team. We got home and my brother had left the message that sure enough it was." One member of the team of 20 survived when the fire they were fighting suddenly reversed direction. The heat proved too intense for the survival tents they employed, and all but one died.

Robert Marsh says Eric's love for fighting fires began many years ago, spending summers in Arizona working with fire teams. After college at ASU, he spent time with the National Forest Service out there during fire seasons, according to his uncle. Then he helped form his own team -- the Granite Mountain Hotshots. Officials said a lightning storm caused several small fires near Yarnell, Ariz. The high winds and scorching 101-degree heat only made the situation worse. So far, funeral plans have not been announced.

Photos: WSOC-TV